PSAT – What is it, what’s on it, and why does it matter?

What is it?

* PSAT stands for ‘Preliminary SAT’
  + It’s a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT.

Why am I taking it?

* Receive feedback on your strengths and what you need to work on regarding skills necessary for college study.
* See how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college.
* Help prepare for the SAT- you can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
* More specifically:
  + The PSAT takes 2 hours and 10 minutes to complete.
  + It has five sections:
    - Two 25-minute critical reading sections
      * Multiple-choice questions covering sentence completion and passage/critical reading
    - Two 25-minute math sections
      * Both multiple-choice and problem solving (grid-ins/student-produced response) questions.
    - One 30-minute writing-skills section.
      * Multiple-choice questions related to identifying sentence errors, improving sentences and improving paragraphs
      * There’s no real writing involved.

What can I do to prepare?

* Get familiar with the questions.
  + Practice tests/questions from each of the sections available at: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html>
    - College Board Question of the day
    - There’s even a College Board question of the day app for iPhones

Things to remember:

* Read all answers before marking your answer sheet
* Work steadily- don’t waste time on hard questions. You can always go back to them later.
* Check your answer sheet regularly to make sure you’re in the right place.
* Don’t feel you have to answer every question
  + Leaving a question blank only takes a fraction of a point off whereas getting a question wrong takes one whole point off

Here’s the deal:

**1 point** if you get the answer **correct**

**¼ point** deducted if you get the answer **wrong**

**0 points** if you leave it **blank**

**YES, you can leave answers blank!**